

# PEOPLE & THINGS

**P**LANS for a Royal residence in Australia are already going ahead. The site most likely to be chosen will be about twenty miles south-east of Canberra in superb pastoral country. It is even hoped that the Duke of Edinburgh may be able to stay on the estate when, as is at present planned, he visits Australia to open the Olympic Games in 1956. Australia will be very disappointed if Queen Elizabeth cannot pay her next visit until 1963, which is the approximate date Her Majesty mentioned before she left for Ceylon. But the world is shrinking so rapidly that in a few years' time Royal residences in the Commonwealth may be as easily reached as Balmoral.

## Palace of Fiction

**T**HERE is an extraordinary coincidence in the consideration of this site south of Canberra, for it is the identical area selected by Nevill Shute for a royal palace in his novel "In the Wet." Shute did not just stick a pin in the map and he is not gifted with second sight. Meticulously he scoured Australia for an appropriate site and having reached his conclusion he made a special journey by car from Melbourne to Canberra to engrave on his memory the place he had chosen.

## The Petrov Affair

**S**OVIET espionage seems to have reached the satisfactory stage achieved by German Intelligence in 1943—a state of war between conflicting departments. Beria nominees have become marked men to be withdrawn from the field as expeditiously as possible. The Petrov case follows the pattern of another Beria man, Yuri Rastvorov, the chief spy in the Soviet Mission in Tokyo who recently "disappeared," with less éclat than Petrov, on the eve of a sudden recall to Moscow.

If any Beria nominee should happen to read this paragraph he may care to recall the fate of Admiral Canaris's "Apparat" towards the end of the war. He may also like to know that many of the couriers from Moscow who have been flying so fast round the world in recent weeks are security officers and that the centres which are likely to be most sensitive to their visits are London, Rome, Tokyo and Latin America.

Moreover I learn on good authority that, for the favourites of Beria, the hands of the clock stand at five minutes to midnight.

## Un-English Usage

**I** BELIEVE that Sir Winston Churchill's rough treatment of foreign names is well suited to this island, and last Sunday I was pained by the appearance of "Mrs.

## By ATTICUS

Petrova" in our news columns. Such is the authority of THE SUNDAY TIMES that this unhappy usage was also adopted later in the week by "The Times," although the B.B.C. and, I think, all other newspapers stuck to the Churchillian "Mrs. Petrov." In diplomatic language "Mme Petrova" would have been permissible, though G-zha, Petrova (short for Gopozha=Mrs. comrade) would have been correct post-revolutionary Russian.

Part of the object of this paragraph is to regain my self-respect after describing the Japanese national drink as "saki" instead of "saké" in the same issue.

## Painting la Lili

**F**OR many people the life of Toulouse-Lautrec has been interpreted once and for all, by an American film. But those who prefer history at first hand will



find, in the Leicester Galleries exhibition of drawings by Albert de Bellerophon (1864-1944), many real memories of Lautrec and his environment.

My own favourite is this drawing of Lautrec's preferred model, Lili, in whose robust and combative features is all the quick-spoken vitality of the period. I was amused, too, to learn of the elementary methods by which Lili acquired a distinguished collection of pictures by Degas, Renoir and Lautrec. Not for her the rude competition of the sale-room; her practice, on stepping down from the model's throne, was to write the words "Belongs to Lili" on the back of the canvas.

## Priceless Secrets

**F**OR private reasons and as a public service I decided to find out the truth about laddered nylons and I despatched a confidential agent into the innermost circles of the stocking world. This is her secret report. "Buy only the products of first-class manufacturers. These are now readily available but many shops do not carry a full range. So choose your manufacturer and then choose a shop which does stock his wares. Change either or both if unsatisfactory. Wear always the correct stocking for the occasion and do not wear twelve denier stockings for gardening or golf. In fact, have a stocking wardrobe containing the following: thirty denier for hard wear, fifteen denier for normal city life and twelve denier for special evening occasions."

No. There is no Pulitzer Prize for Journalism in England.

## Badge of Loyalty

**J**OURNALISTS and Government officials in Washington are becoming expert at answering the stock questions asked by investiga-

tors probing the loyalty of colleagues.

Recently a journalist involved in such an interview was satisfied that he had given all the answers which would put a friend in the most favourable light when his interrogator lowered his voice and asked anxiously: "Is it true that this man is a poet?" This was a new one on the journalist but he hardly hesitated: "Yes," he said. "He is a poet. But he is a very bad one." His interrogator appeared much relieved. Later the journalist learned that his friend had received a clean bill of health.

## Celestial Bulldog

**S**HIGERU YOSHIDA, Japan's redoubtable Prime Minister, whose cigars, bulldog tenacity and impish humour have won him the title of "Honourable Churchill of Tokyo," has established a unique record in modern Parliamentary history: in five different Cabinets he has appointed no fewer than 142 Ministers of State.

If he replaces his gay but penitent Minister of Justice, Ken Inukai, who has just submitted his resignation in the midst of the current corruption scandals, he will bring his record to 143, rising perhaps to 144 if there is trouble over his invocation of Parliamentary privilege to prevent the arrest of the Secretary-General of his Liberal Party, Eisaku Sato, who is charged with complicity in the scandals.

There are dangerous implications in the present crisis. If the Yoshida Cabinet falls, no one can predict what Government changes will follow, and the Japanese people will become even more disillusioned and cynical about their new post-war "democratic" system. One point is certain: Yoshida will defy to the last the mounting demands that he resign.

## The Appian Way

**I** HEAR that my colleague Cyril Connolly is among the many distinguished European writers who have joined with the Italian weekly "Il Mondo" in its campaign against the spoliation of the Via Appia.

The Appian Way, with its towers, catacombs, aqueducts, reliefs and pyramids, is an ideal image of picturesque desertion. The legendary meeting of Jesus and St. Peter before the church of "Domine Quo Vadis?" the famed apostrophes of Goethe, Stendhal and Chateaubriand, the honey-pot canvases of Corot—all combined to stamp the Via Appia as one of the sacred places of Europe.

Very soon, however, the scene may be otherwise unless "Il Mondo's" campaign succeeds. Tenements and filling-stations, traffic-blocks and alberghi diurni will turn the highway of Appius Claudius into a street like any other, and the Campagna itself into an underprivileged suburb. The prospect is one that no lover of Rome can envisage without rage.

## Stones of Venice

**A**SKED to comment on the dispute over the Frank Lloyd Wright design for a modern building on the Grand Canal in Venice Mr. Ernest Hemingway, obliged with: "Put up Frank's building and then demolish it. That way both parties will win."

The Municipality of Venice last week dodged the issue by ruling that the proposed design would violate certain building regulations, and they have asked for modifications. But it is confidently anticipated that the project will in the end be defeated by the popular slogan: "It will be a gold tooth in the mouth of Venice."